

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GREEK-BULGARIAN TRADE TALKS

REF: SOFIA 71; ATHENS 161; ATHENS 456

1. FOLLOWING BY LESS THAN TWO WEEKS THE WELL-PUBLICIZED VISIT OF GREEK FONMIN BITSIOS TO SOFIA, GREEK-BULGARIAN TRADE TALKS TOOK PLACE IN ATHENS JANUARY 20-22. BULGARIAN DELEGATION HEADED BY FOREIGN TRADE UNDERSECRETARY CHRISTOV STOPPED EN ROUTE IN THESSALONIKI TO MEET WITH NORTHERN GREECE MINISTER MARTIS. DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN ATHENS TO PAVE THE WAY FOR A NEW LONG-TERM GREEK-BULGARIAN TRADE AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED IN SOFIA BY COMMERCE MINISTER BOUTOS DURING FEBRUARY GREEK-BULGARIAN INTERMINISTE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE SESSION.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, POINTS DISCUSSED IN ATHENS WERE (A) NEW COMMODITY LISTS AIMED AT EXPANDING TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES; (B) CLOSER COOPERATION IN INDUSTRIAL, TECHNICAL, AND OTHER SECTORS; (C) CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND IN THE EXCHANGE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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TRADE MISSIONS; (D) CHANGE OF SYSTEM GOVERNING TRADE TRANSACTIONS

BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE FOR PAYMENTS OTHER THAN UNDER EXISTING CLEARING ACCOUNTS; (E) TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS, SUCH AS INCREASED USE BY BULGARIA OF THE THESSALONIKI FREE TRADE ZONE AND IMPROVEMENT OF PORT FACILITIES AND THESSALONIKI-KULA RAIL LINK TO PERMIT TRANSPORTATION OF INCREASED VOLUME OF MERCHANDISE; (F) CONNECTION OF GREEK AND BULGARIAN ELECTRIC POWER GRIDS. CHRISTOV REPORTEDLY PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF ALUMINUM PLANT IN GREECE WHICH WOULD USE BULGARIAN ELECTRIC POWER AND SUPPLY ALUMINUM TO BULGARIA. KUBISCH

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